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Viewing cable 07ATHENS2386, KARAMANLIS IN MOSCOW: PAR@THENS 2375

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- The top box shows each cables unique reference number, when and by whom it originally was sent, and what its initial classification was.
- The middle box contains the header information that is associated with the cable. It includes information about the receiver(s) as well as a general subject.
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| Reference ID | Created | Released | Classification | Origin |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 07ATHENS2386 | 2007-12-20 14:42 | 2011-08-30 01:44 | CONFIDENTIAL | Embassy Athens |

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 002386

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/20/2017
TAGS: [EFIN](#) [EINV](#) [ENRG](#) [EPET](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KPRV](#) [GR](#)
SUBJECT: KARAMANLIS IN MOSCOW: PAR@THENS 2375

ClassifQMAN. REASONS 1.4 (@ARY: A partial MFA reQ
visit to Moscow cf the protocol on the
company for the Burgas-Alexandroupolis oil

pipeline, formation of a working group to discuss issues surrounding the South Stream gas pipeline, and agreement on several cultural issues. The MFA confirmed that Karamanlis had congratulated Putin on the Duma elections but claimed he did so only once, not repeatedly, as reported in the Greek press. Karamanlis also described Russia as a "strategic partner," but MFA contacts stressed this was "nothing new" and had "little real meaning." END SUMMARY.

12. (C) Greek MFA A5 Directorate for CIS Countries Counsellor Elisabeth Fotiadou provided the following readout of PM Karamanlis's December 18-19 visit to Moscow. The delegation had just returned, and she received information on the visit from A5 chief Ambassador Nikolas Tsamados, who had accompanied Karamanlis on the trip. FM Bakoyannis and Minister of Development Foliass accompanied Karamanlis, though Bakoyannis was unable to hold a bilateral meeting with Russian FM Lavrov because Lavrov was away from Moscow. Fotiadou said Karamanlis and Putin met one-on-one for an hour then held an expanded delegation meeting. Information on the one-on-one was unavailable so Fotiadou was only able to provide a readout of the enlarged meeting.

ENERGY ISSUES

13. (C) Fotiadou mentioned the signing of the protocol on the Burgas-Alexandroupolis oil pipeline, whose construction would begin in spring 2008. On South Stream, she said there had been no "deep discussion," only an agreement on the need for further discussions. A South Stream working group, with members from the Greek Ministry of Development and the Russian Energy Ministry, was also formed to work on the issue. In February 2008, DFM Doukas and his Russian counterpart Godaev (spelling as heard) would hold in Athens the regular annual bilateral economic community meeting, which was scheduled earlier but postponed due to the Russian Duma elections in early December.

OTHER ISSUES

14. (C) Nothing was mentioned on Kosovo or FYROM/Macedonia at the enlarged meeting, though Fotiadou said her office had prepared TPs for Karamanlis on Kosovo (content not disclosed), which he likely used in the one-on-one. On other European issues, the enlarged group discussed deepening Russia-EU ties, particularly since the break in the logjam over Polish meat and the Russia-EU Partnership and Cooperation Agreement. There also was an extended discussion on cultural issues, including Greek agreement to open a Slavic languages department at Athens University, for which the Russians had been pushing for years. Greece offered to provide advice to Russia on organizing the 2014 Sochi winter Olympics, and the sides agreed to mark a "year of Greece" and a "Year of Russia" in their respective countries in 2013 in the run-up to the Olympics. Karamanlis thanked Putin for Russian assistance during the August fires in Greece, and the sides also discussed tourism in light of the growing number of Russians vacationing in Greece.

ELECTION CONGRATS AND "STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP"

15. (C) On reports that Karamanlis had repeatedly congratulated Putin on the recent Duma elections, Fotiadou confirmed that Karamanlis had indeed offered congratulations but only once during their opening statements. As for reports on Karamanlis talking about a "strategic partnership" or "strategic alliance," Fotiadou said Karamanlis had used the term but that this was "nothing new" and had been done for at least several years. In any case, she said, the term had "little real meaning" and served primarily a protocol purpose.

COMMENT

¶6. (C) Fotiadou's readout was partial, at best, and seemed pitched in a deliberately low-key tone for her American interlocutor. The reality of the meetings was probably somewhere between this and the over-the-top reports carried in the hyperbolic Greek press (reftel). In any case, there did not appear to be much accomplished substantively in Moscow beyond the signing of the agreement to move into the final stages of pre-construction on the Burgas-Alexandroupolis oil pipeline. We will continue to watch the development of Greek-Russian relations closely and to push the Greeks on their position on South Stream. We will also continue to seek a fuller readout on the Moscow visit from the offices of PM Karamanlis and Development Minister Folias.

SPECKHARD